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Letter dated 27 April 2004 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Counter-Terrorism Committee has received the attached report from the League of Arab States submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1373 (2001) (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Inocencio F. **Arias**
Chairman
Security Council Committee established pursuant to
resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism

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Annex

Note verbale date 26 April 2004 from the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee

[Original: Arabic]

The Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism and has the honour to transmit herewith the text of a report prepared by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and covering the efforts made by the League of Arab States in the area of counter-terrorism. The Office of the Permanent Observer would be grateful if you could arrange for this text to be published and circulated as an official document of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism.

The Office of the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

Report on the counter-terrorism efforts made by the League of Arab States

Introduction

While the tragic events of 11 September 2001 signalled the beginning of a vast international counter-terrorism campaign, the Arab States did not wait until that moment to act. Indeed, they had long been aware of the grave danger that terrorism poses both to Arab societies and to humankind as a whole, not to mention international peace and security, which for decades have been affected by this scourge and the tragedies and horrors that it causes. The League of Arab States and all its bodies have also made the issue of terrorism a top priority and have condemned all forms and manifestations of terrorism forcefully, whatever the motives or purposes, at summits, ministerial meetings and specialized ministerial council meetings. Furthermore, the League has taken a number of practical measures and steps to combat terrorism (see the most recent resolution on combating international terrorism (annexed) which the Council of the League adopted at a ministerial meeting held during its one hundred and twenty-first regular session on 3 March 2004).

The efforts made by the League of Arab States in the area of counter-terrorism at the Arab level resulted in the signing on 22 April 1998, during a joint meeting of Arab ministers of justice and of the interior held in Cairo, of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which entered into force on 7 May 1999 and to date has been ratified by 17 Arab States. The League also devotes many efforts, at both the regional and international levels, to combating terrorism. This report describes those efforts, which essentially involve:

(1) Joint Arab action to combat terrorism at the Arab level;

(2) Regional and international cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism.

I. Joint Arab action to combat terrorism at the Arab level

Action by the Arab League involves the following:

1. The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and its implementation mechanism

The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism was signed during a joint meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice held in Cairo in April 1998, thus reflecting the will of States members of the League of Arab States to strengthen their mutual cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism. A joint ministerial commission allocated responsibility to the two aforementioned councils for developing an implementation mechanism of the Convention comprising implementation measures and related questionnaires (52 questionnaires in total) concerning judicial and security cooperation (the annex to this report contains a sample of these questionnaires). Furthermore, the Arab Criminal Police Bureau was given the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Convention by the Arab States and submitting an annual report on its findings to the two aforementioned ministerial councils at

their respective regular sessions. The Bureau is also responsible for following up, in conjunction with the member States, the implementation measures and related questionnaires and evaluating them five years after the entry into force of the Convention. It has already submitted three annual reports covering the years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Within the framework of efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention, the Council of the League of Arab States decided at a summit meeting that it would, pursuant to decision 231 of 28 March 2002, consider the possibility of including among the offences covered by the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism the incitement to or encouragement of terrorism, the printing, circulation or distribution of terrorism-related publications, the use of charitable associations to raise funds earmarked for terrorism, and the acquisition or use of assets for terrorist purposes. In accordance with that decision, a Joint Technical Commission of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice was established. In order to meet the requirements of the aforementioned decision, that Commission drafted an amendment to the Convention which was adopted pursuant to decision 492 taken by the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior at its nineteenth regular session on 8 October 2003 and decision 418 adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice at its twenty-first regular session on 5 January 2004. The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States invited member States to take the necessary constitutional measures for the draft amendment to be ratified.

2. The legal framework of inter-Arab judicial and security cooperation

In addition to the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, inter-Arab judicial and security cooperation is regulated by instruments that were adopted in the context of the League of Arab States, as follows:

1. Extradition Agreement (signed in 1952 and entered into force in 1954);

2. Agreement on the implementation of provisions (signed in 1953 and entered into force in 1954);

3. Agreement concerning letters rogatory (signed in 1953 and entered into force in 1954);

4. Riyadh Convention on judicial cooperation (signed in 1983 and entered into force in 1985);

5. Baghdad Declaration on combating unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation (1989);

6. Arab Agreement on combating illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (1994);

7. Arab counter-terrorism strategy (1994);

8. Arab model law on weapons, ammunition, explosives and dangerous substances (2002).

3. The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior has been concerned, since its inception, with terrorism, because of the extreme dangers for which this

phenomenon poses for society. The diverse activities carried out by the Council within the framework of counter-terrorism can be summarized as follows:

(a) Conventions, strategies and phased plans

The instruments developed by the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior include the following:

(i) The Counter-Terrorism Code of Conduct for States members of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior adopted in 1996 a counter-terrorism code of conduct by which member States pledge to take further action against terrorist elements and prevent them from infiltrating illegally across borders or staying in their territory. Furthermore, Arab States have agreed on the importance and indispensability of lending each other mutual assistance in the search for and arrest of fugitives accused of terrorist offences or sentenced for such offences. The Code also commits member States to the coordination of their surveillance procedures along borders and at points of entry to and egress from the territory to prevent the transport or use of weapons, ammunition and explosives for illegal purposes.

(ii) The Arab Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its two phased plans

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior adopted in 1997 an Arab counter-terrorism strategy that contains a series of definitions and goals and seeks to coordinate counter-terrorism in Arab States and strengthen cooperation with the international community in this area. The Arab Criminal Police Bureau, which is under the jurisdiction of the Council's General Secretariat, monitors the implementation of this Strategy by Arab States and reports annually thereon to the Council at its regular session. To translate its Strategy into action, the Council adopted an initial phased triennial plan in 1998 containing a range of programmes whose execution was entrusted to the General Secretariat (the administrative and technical body of the Council) and the Nayef Arab Academy for Security Sciences (the scientific body of the Council). Once the plan was completed and the approved programmes were executed, the Council adopted at the beginning of 2001 a second phased plan covering the period 2001-2003, all of whose programmes have been implemented. Within the General Secretariat, a working group met to draft a third phased plan, which was submitted and adopted at the twenty-first regular session of the Council, held in Tunis from 4 to 6 January 2004.

(b) Compilation of counter-terrorism legislation and ratified agreements

At the time of implementation of the first and second phased plans of the Arab Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Secretariat assigned to the Arab Criminal Police Bureau the responsibility of:

- Compiling the texts of counter-terrorism laws in force in the member States for distribution to the Ministers of the Interior of Arab countries for their information;
- Compiling the texts of bilateral and multilateral counter-terrorism agreements for distribution to all member States.

In past years, the Arab Criminal Police Bureau has assembled a great deal of material on the counter-terrorism laws in force in Arab States and the relevant agreements that have been ratified, whether they dealt exclusively with terrorism or were concerned with terrorism as part of a general security agreement. Such material and agreements were distributed to Arab States for their information.

(c) Framework laws

In order to establish a legal framework to help Arab States in their efforts to promulgate or modify legislation concerning counter-terrorism, the Council adopted three framework laws, as follows, the text of which has been distributed to member States:

- Arab framework law on counter-terrorism;
- Arab framework law concerning weapons, munitions, explosives and dangerous substances;
- Arab framework law on extradition.

(d) Framework plans

In carrying out the two phased plans of the Arab Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Secretariat developed a series of framework plans to combat the various forms of terrorism. The following framework plans were brought to the attention of member States for their information:

- Two framework plans to combat acts of terrorism (2000), the first of which focuses on legal aspects and the second on practical aspects on the ground;
- Framework plan to combat hijacking and liberate hostages (2001);
- Framework plan for the elimination of groups belonging to organized criminal networks (2000);
- Framework plan to combat acts of terrorism committed aboard means of transport (2002);
- Framework plan for the protection of public buildings against acts of sedition (2002);
- Arab security plan to combat acts of terrorism committed on board ships (under development).

(e) Measures taken to prosecute terrorists

In order to prosecute terrorists, the Arab Criminal Police Bureau has:

- Strengthened inter-Arab cooperation in the area of search, investigation and arrest procedures for fugitives who have perpetrated terrorist offences;
- Ensured coordination between Arab States in the exchange of data, experience and information relating to terrorism problems;
- Received and disseminated "wanted" and "no longer wanted" notices in connection with fugitives accused of terrorist offences or sentenced for such offences;

- Developed a database on terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and communicated to Arab security services all available information in that regard, as well as any new information that becomes available;

- Periodically updated and circulated to all member States the blacklist of persons who have fomented or carried out acts of terrorism.

(f) Annual conferences of counter-terrorism officials

Since 1998, a conference of counter-terrorism officials in Arab countries has been organized every year by the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior. These conferences offer counter-terrorism officials the opportunity to exchange their experiences and know-how, as well as to consider thoroughly the different aspects of terrorism and propose solutions.

(g) Raising public awareness of the dangers of terrorism through the media

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior attaches great importance to information activities designed to raise public awareness of counter-terrorism efforts, which is critical to those efforts. It is in this spirit that it has adopted a series of measures, including the following:

(i) Development of outreach strategies

In the context of the Arab information strategy to raise public awareness about security issues and protect the public from crime, as well as other phased plans adopted by the Council, the following public awareness strategies have been developed by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and then disseminated to the member States for their information:

- A public awareness strategy intended to reaffirm the fundamental concepts of Islam and rectify the erroneous notions that advocates of violence and extremism propagate (1992);

- A model Arab outreach strategy to increase awareness about security issues and protect the public from crime (1998);

- A model Arab outreach strategy to increase awareness among the people of the Arab world about the dangers of terrorism and instil in them spiritual, moral and educational values (1999);

- A model comprehensive outreach strategy to alert the Arab population to the dangers of terrorism (2000).

(ii) Film production to raise public awareness

As part of its mandate, the Arab Security Information Bureau, which is under the jurisdiction of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, has produced the following films, which warn against the dangers of terrorism and urge the population to cooperate with the security services in combating terrorism:

- A film to raise public awareness of the threats that terrorist offences pose to the security and stability of Arab nations (1998);

- A film intended to raise public awareness of the threats that terrorist offences pose to the security and stability of the Arab world and to encourage all strata of society to cooperate with the police services to combat terrorism (1999);
- A film aimed at informing the Arab population about the importance of its role and the magnitude of its responsibilities in the area of terrorism and other acts of violence (2001).

(iii) Publications of press releases

The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States keeps apprised of acts of terrorism committed throughout the world and issues press releases expressing the positions of the Council regarding specific terrorist incidents and terrorism in general. These positions include: the condemnation of all acts of terrorism, regardless of causes and motivation, whether committed by individuals, by groups or by States; the rejection of any act of this type committed in the name of religion; a clear distinction between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples for their liberation and against aggression. The press releases, which are disseminated by various media, are aimed at alerting the public awareness to the dangers of terrorism and refuting the arguments of those who advocate it.

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior has stated the aforementioned positions on more than one occasion. It issued a number of press releases at the end of its fifteenth session (held in Tunis in 1998) and its sixteenth session (held in Amman in 1999). At its seventeenth session (2000) and at its nineteenth session (2002), it issued the Algiers Declaration and the Beirut Declaration.

(b) Cooperation with Arab and international institutions

The Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior is intent on cooperating with the Arab and international institutions involved in counter-terrorism. At the international level, the General Secretariat of the Arab League and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) have signed a memorandum of understanding that defines cooperation between them with respect to crime, including terrorism.

4. Council of Arab Ministers of Justice

Since its inception, the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice has consistently concerned itself with the issue of counter-terrorism. It oversees the implementation of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, as well as relevant international agreements and covenants, and ensures the coordination of Arab positions on the matter. In this context, it has carried out various activities. For example, it invited the members of the Group of Arab States to New York to coordinate their efforts and positions on the issue of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism and the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It received from the Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations a number of reports and notes concerning Arab initiatives on the issue. In addition, it took note of the observations made by some Arab States concerning the aforementioned draft conventions and transmitted them to the Arab Ministers of Justice, as well as to the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, so that the

delegations of Arab Member States may refer to them in the course of meetings on the subject.

The Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice informed the Arab Ministries of Justice of the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. This instrument was adopted by the General Assembly without a vote on 9 September 1999 and was open for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 10 January 2000 to 31 December 2001. The Technical Secretariat urged Arab States to commit themselves to signing and ratifying this Convention or acceding to it, as well as other United Nations instruments on counter-terrorism, and has received a number of replies in that regard. Furthermore, it has established a list of such instruments, while taking into account the responses and explanations contained in the report on measures to eliminate international terrorism which the Secretary-General submitted at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly (annex).

The Council of Arab Ministers of Justice adopted at its most recent session a number of decisions on strengthening coordination between Arab delegations during meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee responsible for drafting a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and urged Arab Ministers of Justice to transmit their observations on this draft convention to the Technical Secretariat of the Council.

The Arab Council of Ministers adopted at its nineteenth session decision 505, dated 8 October 2003, in which it reaffirmed the support of the League of Arab States for the efforts of the United Nations to eliminate international terrorism, particularly with respect to the convening of an international conference to examine the phenomenon of terrorism, the preparation of a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the question of agreeing on a definition of terrorism reflecting the distinction between terrorism and the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation. The Council also reaffirmed, as it had done in its previous resolutions, its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the causes and origin and whatever the motive or purpose. It called for urgent action to address the deep causes of terrorism, and it rejected the accusations of terrorism levied against Arbas and Muslims, while reaffirming the noble principles upheld by Islam and its repudiation of all forms of terrorism. It also urged the Council of the League of Arab States to consider ratifying or acceding to the international instruments concerning counter-terrorism and to submit to the contact point in the League of Arab States which maintained liaison with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, clarifications and proposals concerning the anti-terrorist measures taken pursuant to the aforementioned resolution and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Council also reaffirmed that it was indispensable to strengthen cooperation between the League of Arab States and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, and it asked the Council's Technical Secretariat to monitor cooperation and coordination together with the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and with other competent authorities of Arab States, particularly with respect to technical assistance, the exchange of information and know-how and bringing national laws into line with international instruments concerning counter-terrorism.

5. Coordination and cooperation between the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice

The specialized Arab ministerial councils and organizations established within the framework of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States cooperate closely. The most important aspect of this cooperation is between the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, which resulted in the conclusion of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.

A joint commission of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice and the General Secretariat of the Arab Ministers of the Interior was established in accordance with Decision No. 445, dated 25 October 2002, of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice. This Commission is responsible for considering legal and security-related matters submitted to it by the two aforementioned ministerial councils, to monitor the implementation of decision 445 and coordinate positions at the Arab and international levels, to report to the two councils at their regular session and to ensure that the two secretariats mentioned above continue to communicate with each other and strengthen their cooperation.

The Executive Office of the Council Arab Ministers of Justice adopted at its 24th meeting on 4 March 2002 a decision in which it requested the Technical Secretariat of the Council to implement the resolution on furthering cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior in order to monitor the functioning of the mechanisms for implementing cooperation of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and submit a report on the subject to the Executive Office and the Council. It urged Arab States that had not yet filled out the questionnaire relating to the implementation of the Convention to do so and to ensure coordination between ministries of justice and ministries of the interior in connection with the aforementioned mechanisms.

6. Coordination and cooperation between the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice

In 2003 the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Information held a joint meeting to consider ways of coordinating their activities in the area of information on security matters and of strengthening the role played by information both in the area of combating crime, particularly counter-terrorism, and in the efforts to alert the public to the dangers of terrorism.

II. Cooperation at the regional and international levels in the area of counter-terrorism

1. Cooperation at the regional level

The League of Arab States participated in the work of the special session on terrorism of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers that took place in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) from 1 to 3 April 2002 and resulted in the publication of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on International Terrorism. This Declaration contains a number of essential recommendations, the most important of which reaffirm the need to step up efforts to achieve the ratification of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism; to support the positions taken by States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference during ongoing negotiations on that

convention; and to endeavour to work out an internationally agreed definition of terrorism in which a distinction is drawn between acts of terrorism and legitimate resistance to foreign occupation for the sake of national liberation and self-determination, for incorporation in a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Several States members of the League of Arab States have signed or ratified the Convention of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism and the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. Furthermore, the Arab States participate effectively in the activities that the two aforementioned organizations carry out in the area of counter-terrorism. Coordination between the Arab States and the League of Arab States in regard of activities or efforts undertaken in the framework of the two aforementioned conventions is total and constant. The Technical Secretariat thus sent to the Arab ministers of justice and the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior a copy of the text of the Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism, which was adopted at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers and distributed as a document of the United Nations, upon the request of the Chairperson of the Group of Islamic States of the United Nations, in accordance with resolution 5909 adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and twelfth regular session and the resolution of the joint ministerial commission of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice and the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior.

Generally speaking, the League of Arab States has organized several Arab and regional conferences and colloquiums on terrorism or taken part in activities of this nature.

2. International cooperation

The counter-terrorism activities carried out at the international level by the League of Arab States and by its various bodies are focused essentially on cooperation with the United Nations and all its bodies that deal with terrorism, the follow-up to resolutions and documents issued by these bodies, the consideration and analysis of relevant texts, and cooperation with other competent organizations and international bodies in the area of counter-terrorism. A brief summary of these activities follows.

The Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism was deposited with the Secretary-General and was reproduced in General Assembly documents A/54/301, A/55/179 and A/56/160, dated 3 September 1999, 26 July 2000 and 3 July 2001, respectively. It is one more in the series of international legal instruments concerning the prohibition, suppression and prevention of international terrorism.

In the context of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and in response to a request of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, a contact point responsible for maintaining liaison between the Committee and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States (legal administration) was established. Moreover, in response to the request by the Committee Chairman contained in document A/AC.40/2003/SM.1/2, the General Secretariat of the League reported to the Committee the results that it had obtained in the area of counter-terrorism.

The Secretary General of the League of Arab States has appointed a team of experts responsible for considering Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) in order to find the best means of implementation, for identifying any obstacles that Arab States might encounter when implementing the provisions of the aforementioned resolution and for proposing ways of overcoming such difficulties. The team of experts held its first session at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 13 and 14 January 2002 and at the close of the session issued a report and recommendations, which were adopted at the ministerial and summit meetings. The second session of the team, held in Cairo from 5 to 8 January 2003, also gave rise to a report and recommendations. Within this framework, Arab States expressed their full endorsement of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The team of experts also considered some of the difficulties and negative consequences stemming from the implementation of the resolution and examined possible ways of rectifying them. It recommended that support should be given to the contact point responsible for maintaining liaison between the General Secretariat (legal administration) and the Committee for the purposes of follow-up and coordination.

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States transmitted a report to the Secretary-General on steps taken by the League in the area of counter-terrorism, which were reflected in document A/57/183 and then submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Furthermore, as regards international instruments concerning counter-terrorism, the Secretary-General of the League is in the process of gathering and publishing information on the status of signatures, ratifications and accessions by Arab States and has also distributed a questionnaire of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime concerning the nature of the links between terrorism and other forms of crime.

The League of Arab States participated in another meeting of international and regional organizations and the Counter-Terrorism Committee held in New York on 6 March 2003, at the close of which it submitted a report to the Committee on the activities that it had conducted in the area of counter-terrorism. Following that meeting, a final document was issued with the symbol S/AC.40/200/SM.1/4. At the invitation of the Chairman of the Committee and the Chairman of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, the League also participated in a meeting of representatives of these two committees and international and regional organizations held in Washington on 7 October 2003 to review the follow-up to the implementation of the programme of action of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

In May 2003, a delegation of the League of Arab States met in Vienna with officials from the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to review the accession of Arab States to international instruments on counter-terrorism and to discuss the importance that these States attach to the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. Responsibility for implementation of the programme falls to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, particularly in connection with the provision of technical assistance to States wishing to sign and ratify the aforementioned international instruments in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and in particular to bring their domestic laws in line with the provisions contained in the said instruments.

In accordance with the resolutions and recommendations contained in the reports of the United Nations and concerning the links between terrorism and organized crime as well as between terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, several colloquiums have been organized, including the Arab colloquium on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Convention of March 2002) that was held, under the auspices of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, in the Sudan. The League and the Arab States also participated in an African colloquium on the Palermo Convention that took place in Algiers in October 2002 as well as in an Arab-international ministerial colloquium held in Siracusa (Italy) in December 2003, which dealt with the aforementioned Convention and its additional protocols and was organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences in Siracusa, the Italian Ministry of Justice and the competent United Nations bodies. The Institute had already hosted an Arab colloquium on combating terrorism, organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States. Recently the League took part, through the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, in a seminar on cooperation in the area of the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, which took place in Khartoum from 17 to 19 January 2004 and was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In the light of the note sent by the Director of the Department for Disarmament Affairs to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to request clarifications on the measures which the League had taken to implement the General Assembly resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States submitted the question to the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice. The Executive Bureau of the latter adopted resolution 393, dated 29 April 2003, urging member States to communicate to the contact point responsible for maintaining liaison between the League and the Counter-Terrorism Committee their views, suggestions and ideas regarding General Assembly resolution 57/83 of 9 January 2003 on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, the General Secretariat of the League is looking into the question, together with other bodies in member States responsible for supplying the information needed to reply to the United Nations note in this regard, which followed in the wake of another note on the same topic, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/48.

In this regard, it should be recalled that the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism prohibits the transport by any means of all dangerous substances that could be used as an instrument of death or destruction. Indeed, article 3 of the Convention stipulates that States parties shall endeavour "To develop and strengthen systems for the detection of the movement, importation, exportation, stockpiling and use of weapons, munitions and explosives and of other means of aggression, murder and destruction as well as procedures for monitoring their passage through customs and across borders in order to prevent their transfer from one Contracting State to another or to third-party States other than for lawful purposes". These provisions are in keeping with those in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) as well as General Assembly resolutions 57/83 and 58/48 on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Given the interest of the League of Arab States in the problem of links between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the legal administration of the

League has taken part, at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) in a colloquium that took place in Geneva from 22 to 25 April 2003 and dealt with the question of links between counter-terrorism and the dangers stemming from the proliferation of biological weapons. The League has also taken part in a similar colloquium, held in Washington on 14 May 2002, at the invitation of DePaul University in Chicago.

The League of Arab States has also participated, together with 75 States, in the first international summit of ministers of justice, heads of public prosecutor's offices and similar institutions, which was held in Guatemala from 2 to 5 February 2004. During that meeting, which was focused on strengthening international efforts to combat international terrorism and transnational organized crime, the League submitted a working document on the action it was taking in this area. It was decided that a second international summit of this kind would take place in Qatar in 2005.

In the most recent resolution adopted by the League of Arab States, meeting at the level of Arab Foreign Ministers during its twenty-first regular session on 3 March 2004, the Council once again condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever the motives or purposes, just as it denounced the attacks using explosives and the acts of terrorism to which the Kingdom of Morocco, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Republic of Iraq had been subjected. Furthermore, it urged once again Arab States to communicate to the contact point responsible for maintaining liaison between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Counter-Terrorism Committee details of the measures taken by the League in the area of counter-terrorism. The Council also urged the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Arab ministerial councils concerned to continue to cooperate with the competent United Nations bodies in the area of counter-terrorism and organized crime, and it emphasized the importance of ratifying and acceding to the international conventions on counter-terrorism.

The preceding paragraphs testify to the dynamic and effective role played by the League of Arab States and other bodies at the Arab, regional and international levels in efforts to combat and overcome terrorism.

(*Signed*) Mohamed Radouane **Ben Khadra**
Legal Adviser to the Secretary-General
Director of Legal Administration
President of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of
Arab Ministers of Justice